

Easterling, Deborah

From: Easterling, Deborah
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 2:33 PM
To:
Subject: RE: Property owners vow to fight Duke transmission line | GoUpstate.com

Dear Mr. Then,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email dated August 3, 2015 to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your email will become a part of ND-2015-20-E - Duke Energy Carolinas: Foothills Transmission and Substation Project- 45-Mile Transmission Line Between Asheville, NC, Power Plant and New Substation Near Campobello, SC, and will be posted on our website under this docket.

Please let me know if you should require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Deborah Easterling
Administrative Coordinator

From: Boyd, Jocelyn
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2015 9:50 AM
To: Easterling, Deborah; Duke, Daphne; DeSanty, Tricia
Subject: FW: Property owners vow to fight Duke transmission line | GoUpstate.com

From: Robert Then [[mailto:](#)]
Sent: Monday, August 03, 2015 2:20 PM
To: Boyd, Jocelyn
Subject: Property owners vow to fight Duke transmission line | GoUpstate.com

one of many articles from surrounding county papers showing potential damage to county residents if this line gets approved.

<http://www.goupstate.com/Upstate-property-owners-vow-to-fight-Duke-Energy-plan-for-transmission-line,-substation?Title=Property-owners-vow-to-fight-Duke-transmission-line>

Property owners vow to fight Duke transmission line



When Patty Shedlow moved from Chicago to Campobello 15 years ago to start a business training horses, she never imagined the prospect of a transmission substation being built behind her property.

Since learning of Duke Energy's proposal to do just that, Shedlow has remained active fighting the plan -- which, if approved, would alter the landscape forever. Shedlow attended public meetings in Landrum, Flat Rock, N.C., and Fletcher, N.C., last month to try and gain a better understanding of the proposal but said she was left with more questions than answers.

Duke plans to spend \$320 million to construct a 45-mile, 230-kilovolt transmission line from Asheville, N.C. to a substation that would be built off Interstate 26 in Campobello. It's part of a larger project to convert the coal-burning Asheville plant to natural gas. The power company notified by letter 3,700 landowners in North and South Carolina who may be within 500 feet of the line. The construction could begin in November 2017 and be completed by August 2019, according to Duke.

"We will fight it by every means available until there is no reason to fight anymore," Shedlow said.

Shedlow's 90-acre property is off Smith Chapel Road, where she lives and operates China Farm. The farm offers dressage training and instruction for horses and riders of all skill levels. If a substation is built, Shedlow said she doesn't know if she would continue her business at its current location.

“Whether I would want to stay here under these circumstances with a substation looming in the backyard, I don't know,” Shedlow said. “There is such tremendous resentment from the local people against this thing.”

Since the proposed project was announced, Shedlow has made several trips by pickup truck to the back edge of her property, ending those trips by walking through the woods to see the site where the proposed substation site would be located. The site was filled with trees until recently. Some have been clear cut, Shedlow said.

Looking out over the site last week, Shedlow said, “There are a lot of people that don't want to stay here for this, don't want to be here for this. I came here to get away from this. I never thought we would have to face something like this, never.”

According to the Spartanburg County Assessor's Office, the 198 acres proposed for the substation site was sold by former Spartanburg County Council member Frank Nutt on March 30 to TBP Properties LLC for \$4,963,500. The land's market value in 2014 was \$2,388,366, according to the Assessor's Office. The property's address is listed as West Frontage Street, Campobello, and its usage as qualified agricultural farm vacant.

Shedlow said she never received a letter from Duke regarding its plan. She said she understands there is a growing need for electric power, but alternative solutions should be considered.

“We need power, but people do things in other countries differently with respect for the environment,” Shedlow said.

Duke's plan is polarizing the community because no one wants a transmission line in their backyard, Shedlow said. She said she was also concerned about what method Duke might use to keep weeds down near the substation and transmission line.

“We don't even spray Roundup, because I don't want it to get into the water supply I give to our horses to drink,” Shedlow said. “My horses are on well water because that's a better, cleaner water.”

Regional needs

The proposed transmission line would be supported by steel lattice towers 140 feet high. There are 44 potential route sections for the transmission line. The proposed routes are available for viewing at <http://dukeenergyfoothillsproject.power-viz.com>.

Duke spokesman Ryan Mosier said the line would transport power from the new Asheville natural gas plant to the transmission grid to serve customers throughout the Western Carolinas.

“After we establish the preferred transmission routes, we expect to evaluate the option of an underground transmission alternative,” Mosier said. “However, based on past evaluations, underground transmission lines have not proven to be better than overhead transmission lines because of extremely high cost and environmental concerns. Duke Energy is required to construct in the most cost-effective manner that is reasonable and feasible due to the impact of customers’ rates.”

Mosier said the site in Campobello meets Duke's transmission requirements for size, shape and proximity to transmission facilities. “The selected site is the best option that meets all the criteria and had a property owner willing to sell,” Mosier said.

The maps used by Duke to present potential routes for the transmission line were obtained from the USDA Farm Service Agency's National Agriculture Imagery Program, Mosier said. The maps of North Carolina used by Duke are from 2014, and the maps of South Carolina are from 2013. The purpose of the three public meetings last month was to obtain information about the areas within the alternate corridors that may not have been included in Duke's research.

Duke's existing lines are not enough to meet the company's future energy needs in the region, Mosier said, citing a limited number of high-voltage transmission lines and the capacity of existing lines.

“We are looking to co-locate the new lines where possible along existing transmission line corridors,” Mosier said. “However, two new 230-kV circuits cannot be added to the existing structures on existing lines. We will need to construct a new set of structures to accommodate these new high-voltage lines.”

One proposed route parallels existing transmission infrastructure in part of the study area. Mosier said Thursday he didn't know exactly how the transmission line would be constructed, but it is possible helicopters would be used in the process.

Duke Energy's preferred route for the line will be selected in late 2015, with property owners notified in early 2016.

“Once the preferred route is selected, we will file with the North Carolina Utilities Commission and the Public Service Commission of South Carolina, and the commissions will hold public hearings as part of the very public approval processes in each state,” Mosier said. “We will also need approval from the environmental regulators for aspects of the projects in both states. We also need approval from the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission).”

Duke officials said electricity use is increasing in and around the Asheville area. Demand for electricity in the Western Carolinas service territory is expected to increase by more than 15 percent in the next decade, according to the company.

“Duke Energy has a responsibility to meet our customers' growing demand and to propose solutions that maintain reliable service,” Mosier said. “The transmission infrastructure is needed to maintain system reliability, meet regulatory requirements and fulfill the growing needs of our customers.”

Duke's western area covers more than 160,000 industrial, commercial and residential customers, according to the Times-News in Hendersonville, N.C. As part of Duke's Western Carolinas Modernization Project, the company's new Asheville natural gas plant is set to go online in late 2019, generating 650 megawatts of electricity, compared to the 376 megawatts currently produced at the coal-fired plant, according to the Hendersonville report.

'A very unique area'

As discussion about the project continues, Tryon Equine Hospital co-owner Bill Hay said uncertainty remains for him and many others on where the transmission line will be constructed. Hay opened the hospital last December on Landrum Road, a few miles from Exit 1 off Interstate 26 just over the North Carolina line. The hospital sits on 16 acres and has 20 stalls.

The hospital's property is along the proposed routes being considered by Duke. Hay said he's had three employees say if the transmission line is constructed there they will find employment elsewhere. The 230-kilovolt transmission line, if constructed near the hospital, would also interfere with the magnetic resonance imaging machines used at the hospital and it would be forced to close, Hay said.

“I cannot stay in business here,” Hay said. “They said they wouldn't build it over the hospital but could build it 500 feet away. I can't function as a hospital.”

Hay said clients would also not bring horses to a hospital with a transmission line nearby. Hay said he believed the proposed line was completely incompatible with the region's environment.

"This is an equestrian area," Hay said. "It's an amazing green space that's been developed over the years and years back to the 1920s and 1930s. I can't believe they would ruin this area like that. This is a very unique area. We are all here because this is a very unique area."

Hay said while no one wants a transmission line in their backyard, the entire area loses no matter where the line is constructed. Hay questioned why Duke's plan doesn't include constructing a power source closer to Asheville, instead of a substation in Campobello, 45 miles away.

Still Creek Farm Barn Manager Corinne Rainey said she also has concerns about Duke's proposal. The 90-acre farm features outdoor and covered areas for horse riders to train and is on Collinsville Road in Columbus, N.C. Still Creek also features an aquatic treadmill facility used to help horses rehabilitate and cross-train.

Rainey said Still Creek's location is among the sites potentially affected by a new line. The line would have a negative impact on the economy no matter where it's located, Rainey said.

"Even if it doesn't run through our property, it will run through somebody's property," Rainey said. "People would move."

Rainey said about 50 percent of the horses at Still Creek use the aquatic treadmill to rehab from surgery. The use of helicopters to install and maintain a transmission line nearby would be too stressful for the horses to endure, she said.

Opponents of Duke's proposal said they will continue to fight the company's plan.

"Everybody is scrambling around to see what they can do to stop it or move it," said Suzanne Strickland, who owns Stone Soup restaurant in Landrum.

Libbie Johnson of Tryon said this has been a stressful period for those potentially affected by Duke's plan. She believes the region's economy would be adversely affected by the lines.

The Foothills Preservation Alliance formed July 18 to spread information about Duke's plan. The alliance now has a website at www.foothillspreservationalliance.org, which tracks the process. The group includes Greenspace of Fairview, Golden Hill, the North Pacolet Trail Association, the Ceta Trail Association and the Jackson Grove Property Owners.

Residents can leave comments about the plan on the Duke website at www.duke-energy.com/WCTransmissionEnhancements, call 888-238-0373 or email WCTransmissionEnhancements@duke-energy.com.